

Remarks of Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren On The Marriage Protection Amendment

Media Contact: Heather Wong, 202.225.3072

Washington, D.C. – Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (D – San Jose), questioning the Republican leadership's agenda and priorities for working on meaningful legislation before Congress breaks for recess until after the November elections, today delivered the following remarks on the floor regarding H. Res. 106, the Marriage Protection Amendment:

"The Republican leadership has put us on notice that Congress will probably adjourn next week until after the November elections.

"Congress should have done so much more this year. I think we still have time to get some important things done.

"Yet this week, Republican leaders have decided to bring to the floor a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage and a bill to repeal gun laws in the District of Columbia. Are these really the most important issues facing the nation?

"Earlier this month, the Republican Leader, Tom Delay, said that he would not allow a vote to continue the assault weapons ban because it did not have the votes. When asked about scheduling a vote, he said the following:

• If the president asked me, it'd still be no ... because we don't have the votes to pass an assault weapons ban and it will expire Monday and that's that." AP 9/10/2004

"Despite the overwhelming support of Americans everywhere, he let the assault weapons ban expire. Apparently, Mr. Delay will only bring things to a vote that can pass.

"Yet this week, Mr. Delay has taken a different position on what he brings to the floor. He acknowledged that he does NOT have the votes to pass the marriage amendment before the House. He said this in Roll Call: 'I doubt that it will pass, but this is part of a long-term strategy to protect marriage in this country.' [Roll Call, 9/22/2004]

"I will vote against this amendment. This amendment will not pass the House, and it did not even get a simple majority in the Senate earlier this year. This amendment is going nowhere.

"Let me be clear. The ONLY reason this bill is being considered today is to score political points a month before the election. I am not surprised in the least that the Republicans would put politics before solutions.

"What is shocking to me is that they would waste time on these political games, when they have accomplished so very little this year.

"Earlier this month, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released its Update of the Budget and Economic Outlook, which confirms that the 2004 deficit will be the largest in history, \$422 billion.

"The 2004 deficit figure marks an \$818 billion deterioration from the \$397 billion surplus for 2004 that CBO projected in January 2001, when President Bush took office. Record surpluses to record deficits in just 3 ½ years.

"What have the Republicans done to bring the deficit under control: NOTHING.

"As a result of their policies, and for the third time in three years, Republicans need to increase the debt limit. The Bush Administration has requested that Congress in the next month increase the debt ceiling again. Last year, they got the largest debt limit increase in history: \$984 billion. In 2002, they raised the debt limit by \$450 billion. Now, they need another \$690 billion increase to keep the federal government solvent for just one more year.

"What have to Republicans done to address the national debt: NOTHING.

"The list goes on and on....

- * The Republicans never passed a 2004 budget.

- * The fiscal year ends tomorrow, and yet only ONE of the 13 annual appropriations bills has been signed into law.

- * The 9/11 Commission Report was released on July 22. It has been 71 days and the House and Senate have not voted on its recommendations.

- * We have not passed a transportation reauthorization bill that would provide federal funding for highway, highway safety, and transit programs for the next 5 years.

- * Since January 2001, we have lost 1.7 million private jobs across the country.

- * For the third year in a row, the number of Americans without health insurance has gone up. In 2003, 45.0 million Americans (15.6%) had no health insurance for the entire year -- an increase of 1.4 million people, compared to 2002.

* Medicare premiums are as high as they have ever been.

* According to the Census Bureau, an estimated 35.9 million U.S. residents were living in poverty in 2003, and this number has increased every year for the past 3 years.

"The Republicans control White House. The Republicans control the House of Representatives. The Republicans control the Senate. They control EVERYTHING IN WASHINGTON.

"Despite all of these advantages, all of this power, they have no accomplishments. All they can do is play political games to hide their truly abysmal record and hope that the American people do not notice.

"The House Republicans have controlled Congress for a decade. On January 4, 1995, moments before being sworn in as Speaker, Newt Gingrich told the Members of the House: 'We were hired to do a job and we have to start today to prove we'll do it.'

"The Republicans have had 10 years. Look at their record. They've proven they just can't do this job.

"It is time for a change, and the House Democrats are ready to get to work"